

A

SERMON

P R E A C H'D

Before the Honourable

House of COMMONS,

January 30, 1702/3.

Being an Anniversary SERMON
for the DAY.

By WILLIAM STEPHENS B. D.
Rector of *Sutton* in *Surry*.

L O N D O N,

Printed: And are to be Sold by *A. Baldwin*,
at the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*.
1703.

SERMON

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HOMES OF COMMONS

Being an Anniversary Sermon
for the 100th Anniversary

BY WILLIAM STEPHENS, D.D.
Rector of St. Mark's Church

LONDON

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TITUS III. 1.

Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates; and to be ready to every Work.

TO understand the Reason of this, and such like Admonitions, which frequently occur in the Apostle's Writings, Two things may be premised :

I. That about the time of our Saviour Christ; there arose one *Judas of Galilee* (who is mentioned *Acts 5. 37.*) preaching Seditious Doctrines to the People, and teaching, (as *St. Jerom* in his Comment on my Text observes,) That they ought to own no Sovereign Prince, but God alone : And if they pay'd their Tithes to the Priest, they were discharged from paying Tribute to the Emperor. And upon this Account it was (as *St. Jerom* believed) that the *Pharisees* ask'd our Saviour that captious Question, *Is it lawful to give Tribute to Caesar, or no ?* *Matth: 22. 17.* Now to this Account *Anastasi- us Nicens* adds, That the Followers of this *Judas* were very numerous, and called by the Name of *Galileans*, and commonly looked upon as Men ill affected to the *Roman* Government: Particularly, because when they offered Sacrifice, they refused to make Supplication for the Emperor and People of *Rome*; upon which Account it is thought that *Pilate*, the

Roman Deputy of Judea, came upon them whilst they were sacrificing, and putting them to the sword, mingled their blood with the blood of the sacrifices; as you may read, Luke 13. 1.

And from hence it was, that our Saviour Christ and his Disciples were suspected of favouring Seditious Doctrines, because they came out of *Galilee*, as is observed by *St. Chrysostom*, in his 23d. *Homily on the Romans*, wherein he saith, That great Reports were spread abroad, as if the Disciples were a Faction, seditious People, and designing against the Government. It must also be confessed, that many of the *Jews*, who were converted to the Christian Faith, were not sufficiently respectful to the higher Powers which God's Providence had set over them: For which *Mr. Calvin* gives this Reason, Since the Powers that were then in being, opposed themselves to our Saviour Christ, they thought them unworthy of Respect and Honour.

Now what hath been said concerning the *Gallilean* Perswasion, shews the Reason why the Apostles do so frequently in their Letters direct the Christian Churches to Loyalty, or a due submission to Magistrates.

I. To clear themselves from the false and scandalous Imputation of having imbib'd the Doctrine of *Judas the Gallilean*. And,

2. To undeceive all those that had been perverted by that seditious Doctrine.

II. The second Thing I would premise, is, That about the Time when *St. Paul* wrote this Epistle, the People of *Crete* (which was *Titus* his Diocess) were unruly and mutinous. *Grotius* says, That they were always a Faction, seditious People; and for that Reason *St. Paul* wrote to *Titus*, their Bishop, to put them in mind

be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, and to be ready to every good Work.

I. I shall take Occasion from hence, First, To make a just Comment upon the Text.

II. To set forth the Reasons and Grounds upon which the Apostles founded their Doctrine of Obedience to Civil Magistrates. And,

III. To apply these Reasons in Conjunction with the Occasion of this Day's Humiliation. And,

I. First, It may be observed, That St. Paul does not direct Titus to teach the Doctrine of Civil Obedience as a new Thing but only to refresh their Memorys therewith, *to put them in mind, &c.* For Men cannot be supposed ignorant of the absolute necessity of Government, to the Defence and Support of Society; which were, in effect, to suppose, that 'twere better to lead the Lives of Beasts than Men, and that the World were willing to ly under the continual Calamity of War and Oppression, fill'd only with a Rout of Fools and Madmen. 'Twere to suppose every single Person willing to expose himself to the uncontroll'd World, and bid defiance to the unbounded Power, Rage, and Malice of Mankind. We cannot but see our selves linked together, by common wants into Publick Societies, and these Societies cannot subsist, unless they are upheld by the Power of Government, whose Wisdom and Justice must appear by a due Administration of good Laws: And from hence we cannot but see a Necessity of *Principalities and Powers*, and of superiour and inferiour *Magistrates*, without whom Laws can be neither made nor executed. From whence 'tis very visible, that Subjection to a good Government is as much our Interest as it is our Duty. This was evident to the *Pythagorean* Sect of old, who would not

not suffer the Blood of any Creature to be shed for their use, but yet allow'd the sword of the Magistrate to cut off Malefactors.

The following Words in my Text, are *Principalities and Powers*. Now the Word in the Original signifying something which is Prime and Principal must denote the Supreme Establish'd Power, from whence Inferior Authorities are derived, and is the same with the *higher Powers* mentioned *Rom. 13.* But because St. Paul speaks of *Principalities and Powers* in the Plural Number, 'tis likely that he allude to the Distinction (which was so common among the *Romans*) of the greater and lesser Powers, the former of which, during the Commonwealth, were the Consuls, Pretors, and Censors; all which Powers, in St. Paul's Time, were vested in the Emperor and made up the Imperial Dignity. The lesser powers were all those derived from hence, and were subordinate hereunto. And this Distinction was so nicely observ'd among the *Romans*, that *Julius Caesar* punish'd a Tribune, because he suffered himself to be stiled one of the higher Powers. *Sueton.*

But in the Text it must be observ'd, that our Obedience becomes due, not only to the supreme but inferiour Authorities; for the *Cretans*, to whom *Titus* preached the Gospel, were part of a *Roman* Province, governed by inferiour Officers, deputed from *Rome*, who were the Magistrates they were exhorted to obey. For tho' the superior and inferior Powers differ greatly, if compared among themselves, yet, with respect to the Subjects Obedience, they are to be regarded alike; so that we cannot wilfully disobey the inferiour, without affronting the Sovereign Authority. If then the *Cretans* would obey the Emperor, it must be by submission to the

Ordinances

ordinances and Officers which he had appointed
 their Island; and if they behaved themselves faithfully
 to these Magistrats, they discharged their Duty
 to the Imperial Power which deputed them.

We see that a large Family cannot be governed
 the Personal Presence of the Master, much less
 an Empire; so that there will be need to call in
 the Prince's Assistance, such Persons into whom
 he may diffuse some measure of his Political Soul, and
 whereby unite them as Members to his own Body
 politick; whereupon they are to be treated as the
 hands, Arms, and Eyes of Majesty: And hence
 thus admonish'd them, not only to be subject to Prin-
 cipalities and Powers, but to obey Magistrates.

II. The second Thing I propos'd to speak to,
 were the Reasons upon which the Apostles ground
 their Doctrine of Civil Obedience, which are
 two: The one is given by St. Paul, who teaches
 that every Soul should be subject to the highest
 Powers, because the Magistrate is the Minister of
 God to us for good, Rom. 13. 1. 4. The second Reason
 is given by St. Peter, (viz.) Because all Govern-
 ments and Governors do arise from our own Con-
 sent; Submit your selves, (saith he) to every Ordinance
 of man, for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as
 Supreme, &c. Where note, That the King is called
 the Ordinance, or Creature of Man, because the
 sovereign Power itself is vested in Men, according
 to humane Compact: And from hence our
 subjection is urged by St. Peter, 1 Epist. 2 Chap. 13.
 1. To begin with St. Paul's Argument, who calls
 Magistracy a Divine Ordinance, because of the
 excellent Use of it, whereby good Magistrates re-
 semble the Divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness,

in securing to all Men their Rights and Properties; in preserving the Peace, Health, and Safety of Societies, both with Respect to Body and Soul. But to be more particular.

1. The preservation of Property was the first benefit for which Magistracy was designed. Now Property is originally attained by the Labour of either Body or Mind; for supposing the Earth to have been common to its first Inhabitants, it will follow that who ever took the Pains to cultivate any part of it and lay up necessary Stores for his use, had by this his Industry made himself the true Proprietor thereof. And could we suppose this new Proprietor to be as well guarded, as that Man we read of in the Gospel, who was well Armed, and kept his Palace and Goods in Peace, yet it may likewise be supposed (as it there follows) that if a Stronger than he shall come upon him, he will take from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divide his Spoils. And this uncertain condition of Property shews the reason of Mens uniting into Societies, and setting up forms of Government, which is for mutual Defence and Preservation of Property. And that, not only for the benefit of the present Possessors, but of future Generations. So that what becomes a Man's own, either by Labour, Gift or Purchase, may with safety be enjoyed by himself, and also conveyed down to Posterity.

Life and Limbs are ours by the gift of God. And these Properties are liable to be invaded and destroyed; Tho they cannot (like other Goods) be transfer'd to the use of the Spoiler, And since there is so much Variance and Malice, Pride and Strife among Mankind, what ill Offices may not one Man apprehend from another? But when

destructive Malice, a Fiend of Hell shall Transform it self into an Angel of Light, and persuade Men that they are then inspired with the Spirit of God when they are possessed by the Devil, the great Enemy and Destroyer of Mankind. When under the pretence of Religion it self Men will exert their sharpest Malice, not only against the Possessions and Liberties, but even against the Lives of one another, how great need is there of the Magistrates interpoling Power to disarm them of their Spiritual as well as Carnal Weapons of Warfare? to take away the Ball of Contention from among them, and the power of evil doing from all contending Parties. And,

3. In this the Magistrate is God's Minister to us, for good, not only with respect to the preservation of our Liberties and Lives from Destruction, but of our Souls from Sin; for whilst this just Liberty, this natural right of worshipping God according to that knowledge hath given us, is supported by Law, no Man is forced into Hypocritical Compliances contrary to the Direction of his Conscience; but every one may worship the one true God in singleness of Heart, whereas on the other hand, if in matters of Religion, Force be suffered to take the place of Reason, all Religions will be alike, (as Colours in the Dark) undistinguishable.

And altho the Magistrates can bestow no Divine Grace upon the Souls of Men, yet whilst by punishing Vice, Immoral Practices are restrained, he prevents the overflowing of Sin in a Land. And ceasing to do evil, be one step towards learning to do well, whilst the Civil Powers restrain us from immoralities, they turn us out of the broad way of Perdition into the Paths of Righteousness and Peace.

From

From hence then it appears, That they who are wanting in their Submission and Assistance to the Civil Ministry of God, are false to their own Interest, as well as that of their Posterity. Whereas on the other hand, he who is ready to every good Work which may support this Divine Ministry to us for good, will be sure in the performance of his Duty to find his Account.

Let us then take a view of our Goods and Chattels, Houses and Lands, Wives and Children; let us consider the Blessings of Health, Safety, and Liberties: Let us think how to preserve our Lives from Destruction, our Souls from Sin: Whether we Eat, or Drink, or Sleep, or wake, or whatever we do with Comfort or Safety, we hereby discover our continual Obligation to the good Magistrates Care over us, whereby we are put in mind to be Subjects, &c.

2. The other Reason of Submission given by St. Peter, is, Because all Governments and Governments arise from the Peoples Consent. They are the Ordinances and Appointments of Men, the Creatures of human Compact. For we do not find that God did appoint any form of Political Government, for a Patern to be follow'd by any Society now in being upon the Earth. We see no such Rule in the Book of Nature; nor do we read in Scripture of any particular Polity prescribed to all, or any People, now Imbodyed in the World. We read there, That all Governments and Governors are appointed by Gods Providence; *By me Kings Reign, &c.* But we find no particular Administration, no particular Family, or single Person, now in being, ordained to Government by Divine Precept; but each Magistrat and Magi-

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cracy is left to the Ordinance and Appointment of those Men who have joined themselves together in Society.

The great Variety we see in Civil Governments, shews, that they are all the Effects of human Contrivance, and suited to the several Interests of the Respective Societies. Thus the Ancient Charter of the Neighbouring City, containing all those useful and necessary Powers, by which so great a Body is governed, was it not the wise Contrivance of their Ancestors? And did it not receive its Establishment from the Principalities and Powers of the Realm? And the Great Charter of the Realm it self, is no more than the wise Ordinance of our Fore-fathers? And the Dates of its Royal Confirmations are still remaining among us. And as several smaller Societies have their free Customs distinct from one another; So in different Nations there are various Judgments even of the Sovereign Power, which appear to be the Effects of Free-will: Because in every rational Government something may be observed which is peculiar and distinguishing.

Furthermore have we not seen the Forms of Government even in the same Nations changed from what they formerly had been? As in *Sweden, France, and Denmark*. And have not our Eyes beheld of late Years the Legal Forms of the *English* Monarchy degenerated into Tyranny, & again recovered, through God's Blessing, together with the Courage and Conduct of the Man of his own Right Hand, who by Restoring our Ancient Liberties, justly recommended himself to the Imperial Crown of his Realm by the Free Consent of the People.

Now was it otherwise of old, when *Moses* was by Meekness and Miracle recommended of God to be the

the Father of his Country. For tho by a Divine Power he wrought out Deliverance from Egypt by Conducting them into the Wilderness, yet there was no Form of Government established among the Tribes; till *Jehro* made a Visit to his Son in Law *Moses*, to whose Counsel it was owing, that a sound Polity was set up in the Land of *Israel*. For instead of the whole burden of the Government lying upon *Moses*, which *Jehro* told him was not good, he directs him to provide out of all the People able men such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness, and place such over them to be Rulers over Thousands, Rulers of Hundreds, Rulers of Fifties and Rulers of Tens: And let them judge the People at all Seasons. And it shall be (saith *Jehro*) that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: *Exod.* 18. 17, 21, 22. Thus the burden of the Civil Government should sit easie upon the Governors, and the People should receive a quick dispatch of their Affairs.

Moses (as you read) follows this advice, and joynt himself with the Tribes of *Israel* in the choice of Persons fit for this Administration, as will appear by comparing the 24th. Verse of the forecited Chapter of *Deut.* In the former verse we read that *Moses* chose able Men out of *Israel*, and made them Heads over the People. But the latter place shews that the Peoples Consent was had in the election of these Officers. For as *Moses* repeats the Circumstances of that Action, *Deut.* 1. 9. &c. And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bare you myself alone, &c. take ye therefore wise Men and understanding, and known among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you. From hence it appears,

I. That the Old Constitution of *Israel's* Government,

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nt, was the Contrivance of *Jethro* an *Heathen*, and
Magistrats who were in the Administration
re chosen by the Joint Consent of *Moses*, and the
ople. And,

2. That no one Person, tho never so able, so
ise, and Valiant as *Moses*, is sufficient to Govern
Nation without the Advice and joint Assistance of
erious Magistrats. Much less such a Man who
h no pretence to the Spirit and Character of this
vine Legislator.

It has been thought by some, that a great Con-
eror might form a Civil Government in a con-
er'd Nation, without the Consent of the People
the sole Power of his own Will. And suppose it
ere so, then that Government would be an Hu-
ane Ordinance, because the Conqueror is but
Man. But I deny it to be possible for any
conqueror, tho never so great, to make himself a
ng over any People without their Consent. For
let pass what our Histories tell us of the Capitu-
ions which follow'd the respective Conquests of
e Saxons, Danes, and Normans, before they erected
y Form of Government in this Land. Let us sup-
se that a Great General, with a powerful Foreign
my, should so far over-run a Nation, that the
ople thereof could not be able to make any con-
erable Resistance; in such a Case the Relations
Lord and Slave, are actually introduc'd by the
onquest. The Conquerors are *Lords*, and the Na-
e *Slaves*: But then this State is a State of War
l, but no Political or Civil Constitution. The
bsolute Lord and his Slave are as yet upon no ci-
Terms with one another, no Obligations have
yet pass'd between them, but they are both desir-
their own Wills; and if the Lord may take away
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the Life of his Slave, the Slave is under no Obligation of dealing otherwise with his Lord. So that this Great General intends to rule in Peace over the Conquer'd People, he will find himself constrain'd to enter into some Terms of Compact with them upon which they are willing to accept him for the Head of their Government, and oblige themselves to obey him. But put the Case, that a Nation, to avoid present Destruction, would Consent to make themselves Legal Slaves, this can no more oblige them, than an honest Man is bound to keep Promise with a barbarous Highway-man; for iniquity cannot be established by a Law, much less can it bind Posterity, of whose Lives and Liberties they had no Right to dispose. And consequently, they may justly restore themselves to a State of Freedom when ever they are able.

And if a mighty Conqueror cannot attain a Civil Power over a Conquer'd People without their Consent, how shall he obtain it over his own Conquering Nation, without their free Concurrence? Did this Victorious People leave their Native Country with all the Liberties they enjoy'd therein, to follow their Chief into a Foreign Land, wherein they hoped to find a better Settlement for themselves and Posterity; would they indure all the Hardships of War, and by their Sweat and Blood purchase an intricate Conquest, that they might be reduced to the miserable Condition of the Conquer'd People? that is, to become Slaves to their General. I allow, that this Chief may be the help of his own People, make himself own'd by the Conquer'd upon advantageous Terms. But by what invisible power shall he gain to be (I will not say absolute Master, but even) the Civil Head over his new settled Colony.

can be nothing else, but their own free Consent which can Invest him with a Political Headship over them. And then, how great Reason have they to Pay a due Submission to that Ordinance which themselves have made, and to submit to Principalities and Powers which were their own Appointment, and for their own Benefit?

III. Having thus set forth the Apostolical Grounds of Civil Obedience, I crave leave to make some improvement of them: First, by way of General Application, for to insist on the dismal Effects of this says Tragedy (with which you have been annually acquainted all your Lives) would be superfluous labour. And therefore I shall rather endeavour to *offer some Cautions which may probably prevent the like mischiefs for the future.* But,

1st. The Apostolical Reasons of Obedience being duly considered, may serve to allay the Fears and Jealousys of some good Men, who have conceived, that a National Government hath not so sure a Foundation as is necessary, if it be only bottom'd upon human Compact: Because Mens minds being subject to frequent Alterations, all Governments will, they think, be very unsteady.

And it must be acknowledged, that in all dubious matters, wherein the Judgement cannot come to a determination, the minds of Men will be unsettled. Likewise in smaller Matters, scarce worthy of serious Deliberation, Men will act differently. Nay, in matters of Moment, some Men may suffer themselves to be carry'd away by unaccountable Caprices; but yet none of these things can any ways endanger a Constitution settled upon the Foundations before mentioned.

2^d. Because a good Government is a matter of so

necessary Importance, that no Man in his Wits can doubt whether he shall concur to its Support or no. And,

2^{dly}. The Compact by which all Governours are introduced, is evermore Solemn and Deliberate, and attended with the strongest tie to the Sovereign Power, by which 'tis possible for a Man to ratifie the solemn Obligations he has contracted. For such a Bond is, *the Oath of the Lord*, by which the Allegiance of the Subject is confirmed. And if a deliberate Compact freely enter'd into upon the wisest and strongest motives of Advantage, confirm'd by solemn Oaths and Promises, be not a sufficient Establishment, 'tis hard to say what is such. And notwithstanding some men may suffer themselves to be carry'd away from a useful and necessary Establishment, by Reasonings contrary to the general stream of a Nation, it cannot be presum'd that the Number and Abilities of such Men, will ever be sufficient to unhinge any tolerable Administration of a Government thus Established.

Indeed, Nothing but an Absolute Necessity, and such as is visible in an Extraordinary manner, will be effectual to work a Change in any settled Constitution, such a one as renders Mankind fully satisfied without the least remaining scruple, that the Government then in being is not the Ordinance of God to them for good.

2. From what hath been said it also appears, that no Man's pretence to the Membership of any pure Apostolick Church, can excuse, much less warrant his disaffection to that Government, which God's Providence and Man's Consent have set over a People for their good.

I speak this to take away that Scandal which some have

we have endeavoured to fix upon the *Church of England*; if she had lain any Obligation upon her Sons, in opposition to the present Constitution. Whereas the contrary Truth is self-evident. For, does not our Church in her *sixth Article* receive all the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, and account them Canonical? Is not my next part of that Canon? And are not all our Bishops and Clergy thereby obliged, as much as *Titus* was, to put their Hearers in mind of their *Subjection to Principalities and Powers*? or can we pretend to be Members of an Apostolical Church, if we carry ourselves unseemly towards such a Government, whose administration directly tends to our Common Good, and was also our own Ordinance and Appointment? which are the Apostolical Reasons of Civil Obedience.

I speak not this, as if by Vertue of the Ministerial function we could pretend to prescribe Forms of Civil Government to Nations, to determine the Regalia of Princes, or the subordinate power of inferior Magistrates. *The Book of God* does not furnish us with Abilities for this Work, much less require it of us. It enjoins us to make peace among our Neighbours, by endeavouring to encline Mens minds to a peaceable Temper; but it does not enable us to judge the least point of Legal Right which is in Contraversie between them; much less does it teach us to determine the Rights, Titles or powers of Princes and Magistrates, but yet enjoins us to put Men in mind to be ready to every good work, which may contribute to support a good Government.

3dly, From the Doctrine already set forth, in Connection with the misfortunes of that Sovereign since which are this Day called to Remembrance,

arise matter of Caution to two sorts of People
First, To all those who have the Honour to share
 the Publick Administration; that they make it their
 Equal Care, that the Government which at present
 we enjoy, may be *always the Ministry of God to us for
 good*. For such an Administration applies the Text
 in the most sensible manner, convincing every one
 that he ought to be *subject to Principalities and Powers
 to obey Magistrates, and to be ready to every good Work*.
 It is well known, that the Character of a good
 Prince is raised so high in the Holy Scripture, that
 such are called *Gods* upon Earth; to admonish them
 of that continual overflowing Kindness, that uni-
 versal Beneficence, that tender Care and Concern
 for their Peoples Welfare; which their High Of-
 fice requires. And from the Scriptures we are also
 informed, That the kind Providences of God are
 immediately conveyed to Men by his Holy An-
 gels, who are therefore called *Ministring Spirits*.
Heb. 1. 14. and are most especially imployed in
 Works of Deliverance. By their means *Lot* was de-
 livered out of *Sodom*, *Isaac* from the Arm that was
 stretched forth to make him a Sacrifice, *Israel* was
 conducted through the Wilderness to *Canaan*, *Eli-
 jah* delivered from Famine, and at last carried from
 Earth to Heaven. By their means *Daniel* was de-
 livered from the Lions, and the Three *Israelites* from
 the fiery Furnace. These were the Heralds who
 first published the Redemption of the World by our
 Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who likewise delivered *Peter*
 from his Chains, *Paul* and *Silas* from their Imprison-
 ment. Whereby a Patron is set up to the Ministry
 of a Great and Good Prince; who are hereby di-
 rected to Cultivate and Adorne that Deliverance
 which their Great Master hath wrought out for his
 People.

First, By being the first Messengers, and Promoters of those Methods, which may for ever hereafter secure our Liberties from danger of Relapse. *Secondly*, By a diligent avoiding of all those Methods by which the Glory of former Princes has been eclipsed, and the Hearts of their People alienated from them.

The subordinate Ministry is the Visible Majesty of the King, whereby he is made known to his People, and more especially in time of Peace; For, during a War, the personal Courage and Conduct of a great Prince is made very Publick, whilst his Person is exposed to the View of Multitudes; yet when Peace shall restore him to a more private state of Life, his Personal Endowments, tho never so illustrious in themselves, cannot become visible to the Body of a People any other way than by the constant Care and Conduct, the Great Diligence and Publick Spirit of those to whom he hath committed the Trust of his People's Welfare: The want of this Necessary Concern for Publick Good, and, in some measure, assist bringing on that Tragical Scene, which is this Day Commemorated.

As 'tis commonly seen, that Men in a private Condition of Life are reduced to great Miseries, by the Misd-administration of those to whom they had committed their private Trusts: But when the *Publick Ministry* shall join together Hearts and Hands, only to promote the *Publick Weal*, without the least design of warping the *Princes Favour* towards any one *Party of Men*, which like the Light of the Sun, and breathings of the Air, is designed for common Comfort and Refreshment, no Jealousies, Fears, or Disaffections can arise: 'twill then be impossible for the most Wicked and Malicious to

disturb the *Publick Peace*, but the *Kings Throne* will be *established in Righteousness*, and the *Voice of the People* will be, *O King live for ever.*

Secondly, A second Caution affects all those who are concerned for the Body of the People, that they let slip no Opportunity wherein *Publick Advantages* are offered to them. The *Supream Magistrate* is the greatest *Minister of God to us for Good*: But God himself is not wont to enforce his Kindness upon us; but expects our own Concurrence for our own behoof; and when a Gracious Prince shall make it appear, both by Words and Facts, that He cannot have any Separate Interest from that of His People; when he shews himself ready to every good Work which is esteemed Beneficial to His People, tho His Compliance therewith may be Complicated with some Circumstances of Self-denial, 'twould be a matter of sad Reflection, if the *Publick Weal* should not be improv'd by the Advantages which so Good and Gracious an Inclination administers unto us. An unanimous Consensus in any Matter of publick Benefit will certainly procure it. To know what is good for us, is to attain it.

There is also one Rule which our Saviour Christ has left with us, tending to the Improvement of Knowledge, which when reduced to Practice will suffer no Man to be Ignorant of what is good and fit to be done; 'tis only to carry a single Eye about us, according to what is said *Math. 6. 22. The light of the Body is the Eye, if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light.* If the Eye of a Man be carried on singly (without any blasing Affection,) towards either *Publick or Private Good*, he will certainly discover

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the good which he looked for. But, if in the search
 after publick weal any private By-ends be aimed at,
 a private Love to our selves, or a particular Re-
 sultment against any *Persons or Parties* shall Over-rule,
 either the Admiration or Disesteem of others shall
 incline Men to refuse *Good Promises*, or embrace *Sus-
 picious Proposals*, if any thing besides a sincere desire
 to promote the publick Weal, shall bear Sway in a
publick Council, 'tis no strange thing if *Darkness* shall
 be called *Light*, and *Light* *Darkness*.

It may also be observed, That amongst the many
 Qualifications which have recommended our Holy
 Religion, no one has more forced its way among
 serious and considering Men than *its being so admir-
 ably adopted to the Happiness of Mankind, and the Good
 Societies*.

Unbelievers have denied its *Miracles*, and its *My-
 steries* have been disputed and derided by *Sceptical
 and Profane Men*. But the greatest Opposers of the
 Christian Name can neither deny nor dispute the
 Royal Tendency of *Meekness, Moderation, Punctual-
 Justice, and Universal Good-Will*, to make Men live
 well one with another, *doing to others as we would have
 them to do to us, and loving our very enemies*, leave no
 room either for private Oppression or Publick Di-
 turbance. The Spirit of this Religion will not suf-
 fer us to perpetuate Animosities, or carry on Suspi-
 cions too far: To think that Men who have once
 been in the wrong, can never be convinced, never
 repent of their Errors: 'Twill suffer no Suspensions
 to hinder from a due Consideration of any *Proposals*
 in behalf of *Publick Good*, from whatever Quarter they
 may come: Where the *Single Eye* is thus directed in
 a straight Line towards the Publick Weal, the whole
 body of such a Council will be *full of Light*, whereby
 they will certainly discover *the things which belong to*

our Peace. These things can never be hid when Prince and People are thus in Quest of them.

God forbid therefore, That this Day of Solemn Humiliation should be made use of to flatter Prince with Notions of Arbitrary Power, by drawing any Conclusions from the Ancient Government of God's peculiar People, which may colour over Modern Tyranny. God forbid, that the Roman Imperial Power in the hands of *Claudius*, or *Nero*, should be own'd as Gods Ministry, under which the Apostle of Christ suffered Martyrdom. To entertain people with the melancholly Thoughts of Fetters and Chains, which when laid upon them by ill Prince yet they must not endeavour to remove under penalty of Eternal Damnation, tends only to exasperate Humane Nature, and make way for such another Day of Humiliation as that we are now Celebrating: Which, may Divine Goodness for ever prevent! God forbid, that this day should be made use of to continue Heats and Animosities among us which ought long since to be buried in Oblivion. Especially when the Tragical Scene of this Day, was not then the Act of the whole Nation, and few Spectators of it, scarce any Actors in it, are now remaining.

But since the Condition of the greatest Men on Earth is subject to such *Fatal Catastrophes*, as that which this Day brings to mind, I cannot but lament the unhappy Fate of these Princes who are born in purple and bred in Luxury, incompass'd with Flatterers and so intoxicated with the gaudy Ornaments of Power, as to forget the end for which they were elevated, and made Gods upon Earth. They little consider that this Greatness is supported by the Inheritance

ritance of the Gentleman, the Hazard of the Mer-
 chant, and the Sweat of the Labourer; who readily
 contribute out of their Small Stock to support a
 Government they themselves have set up. Who are
 contented to part with their Natural Liberty to those
 who formerly (it may be) were their Equals, for
 their Common Good and Protection, which is the
 only end of Government. A due reflection hereon
 should make them first of all adore the Goodness of
 God whose Providence hath so distinguished them,
 and also love and cherish that Society of Men, who
 hath raised them to so high a Station, and submitted
 themselves and their Fortunes in a great measure, to
 their Discretion. Then the World would see the
 best Men in the highest places, Senates in Authority,
 Magistrates in Esteem, and the Temple of Virtue the
 only passage to that of Honour. Ambition and
 Corruption will be out of Countenance, and the
 World will Triumph in an undisturbed Felicity.
 The Prince will be happy in the Reverence and Re-
 spect of his People, and the People safe in the Ge-
 nerosity of the Prince.

All this and more we may expect from his Maje-
 sty's most Happy Reign, who was (not like others)
 nursed up in Flattery, but tasted early of the Cup
 of Affliction, that his Greatness might be owing to
 his own Courage, Vertue and Integrity, and not
 to an Uncertain Gift of Fortune. Wise by Nature,
 improv'd by early Adversity, and consummated by
 long Experience in all the Paths of Greatness; a
 Prince Lov'd and Obey'd by his own Subjects,
 Honour'd by his Allies, Dreaded by his Enemies,
 and will be Admired by late Posterity.

Nor do I here insist upon his Great Performances
 in the Art of War, in which other Princes have
 had

had their share, and are often themselves the wretched Trophy, erected upon the Tears of miserable Men. But in his early Years, to restore his Native Country, and since that, the Liberties of Three most Potent Nations, are Glories peculiar to himself, and cannot be equall'd by the Exploits of the most Renowned Chiefs, either of the *Assyrian, Grecian, or Roman* Monarchs. And to Consummate all the Felicity that can happen to Mortal-Man, it hath been a Peculiar Honour reserv'd by Providence for him alone, that as where-ever he sets his Foot, Slaves fled before them like a phantome, so in his Dominions and under his protection, are almost all the remains of Liberty now known in the World.

Not that I speak this, or any thing else I have here said, for your Information, (for I know from what honourable Assembly I ought to receive Instruction but as my Text directed me for your Remembrance.

F I N I S.